Holy Images and Likeness

Gilbert Dagron

Your artists, then, like Phidias and Praxiteles, went up, I suppose, to heaven and took a copy of the forms of the gods, and then reproduced these by their art, or was there any other influence which presided over and guided their moulding?
There was, said Apollonius. . . . Imagination wrought these works, a wiser and subtler artist by far than imitation; for imitation can only create as its handiwork what it has seen, but imagination equally what it has not seen; for it will conceive of its ideal with reference to the reality.

Philostratus, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana,* VI, 19

I. Painting after the Model's Likeness

The Byzantines said that their beautiful icons, which seem to us to be disembodied, stylized, idealized images, were the exact likeness of their models, that they were both the reproduction of (ἐκτύπωμα) and equivalent to (ὁμοίωμα) the models. Sometimes, however, this resemblance seems to be concrete, as are facial features, physical characteristics, dress, and posture; sometimes it is conceived of as more abstract, like the relationship between a word and what it represents. For instance, both an inscription and a drawing were called γραφή, and the verb γράφειν means the act of painting as well as describing.[1] One must be able to say "It is he" or "It is she," and thereby confer on an unambiguous, agreed upon, stable pictorial language of a given culture, a status similar to that of the written or spoken word. It has to do with the truth but also with effectiveness, since the believer hopes for a direct relationship with the holy one through his or her image. In a religious painting, one can recognize not only a model but also an artist ("It is a Virgin by Raphael"); one can vaunt the skill of this artist and compete with him by trying to create the same illusion with rhetoric—in an ἔκφρασις—instead of with form and color. On the contrary, a cult image can only be

recognized as true and, therefore, valid if the artist and the art disappear, in other words, if subjectivity acting as a screen, and if an illusion which would be a lie, disappear.

To obtain such a representation "naturally" conforming to its "prototype," only hagiography is capable of a radical solution, because it is miraculous. The saint or Christ himself helps the powerless artist, or takes his place in order to achieve an absolute likeness.[2] In this multiform *topos,* the image creates itself; it is a photograph, a relic. In the absence of the shortcut of the miracle, there is also the longer route of tradition, which traces the most sacred iconographic types back to images supposedly taken from life (like the portraits of St. Luke[3] or those of the painter of the Life of Pancratius of Taormina[4]). This does not eliminate the artist but depersonalizes him by placing him within a line of copyists. He is not responsible for the likeness. An ambiguous anecdote was related to Russian pilgrims in Constantinople before a mosaic of Christ

[1] Cf. H. Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton, 1981), 9.

[2] See, e.g., *Vita S. Niconis Metanoeite* (*BHG,* 1666–67), ed. Sp. Lambros, Νέος Ἑλλ. 3 (1906), 179–80; ed. O. Lampsides, Ὁ ἐκ Πόντου ὅσιος Νίκων ὁ Μετανοεῖτε (Athens, 1983), 90–92 and 202–4; trans. in C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312–1453* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1972), 212–13. The artist was unsuccessful in drawing the portrait of the saint from an oral description. Suddenly a monk appeared and told him that he resembled Nikon. It was Nikon himself, a *post mortem* apparition. The artist discovered the exact image of the saint miraculously reproduced on the icon, and all he had to do was add the colors.

[3] See now H. Belting, *Bild und Kult: Eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst* (Munich, 1990), 70–72. The legend grew as time went on and made St. Luke into a painter of the Apostles and not just of the Virgin and Child.

[4] Pending Cynthia J. Stallman's edition, the text of the *Vita of St. Pancratius of Taormina* (*BHG,* 1410) must be consulted in the excerpts given by A. N. Veselovskij, *Iz istorii romana i povesti,* in *Sbornik otdelenija russkago jazika i slovesnosti imperatorskoj Akademii Nauk* 40, 2 (St. Petersburg, 1886), 65–128. This work was written in the latter half of the 8th century to prove the quasi-apostolicity of the seat of Taormina, but may contain an older core; cf. M. Van Esbroeck and U. Zanetti, "Le dossier hagiographique de S. Pancrace de Taormina," paper read at the symposium Storia della Sicilia e tradizione agiografica nella tarda antichità, Catania, 20–22 May 1986.

in St. Sophia.[5] Pleased with his nearly finished work, the artist cried out, "I have made you just as you were!" To which an angry Christ replied, before paralysing the artist, "And when have you ever seen me?" The likeness was perfect, but this was not due to the painter.

Apart from hagiography, there are other responses, less definitive but more thought-out, to the conundrum of authentic reproduction, which at least demonstrate an awareness of the problem. Let us look briefly at three well-known texts and, through them, at three different approaches and sensibilities.

(1) In possibly authentic fragments read at the iconoclastic Synod of Hieria in 754 and preserved in the refutation made by Patriarch Nicephorus, Epiphanius of Salamis denied any historical truth for the false images of the prophets, the Apostles, and Christ which were produced by painters solely from their own imagination (ἐξ ἰδίας αὐτῶν ἐννοίας . . . ἐξ ὑπονοίας . . . ἀπὸ ἰδίας ἐννοίας διανοούμενοι). The representations of Christ with long hair, a bearded Peter with short hair, and a bald-headed Paul were not supported by any historical evidence.[6] Like Christ in the anecdote, Epiphanius and the iconoclasts echoed his words in asking the painter, "When did you see them?" but came to the conclusion that there was a total absence of likeness and condemned the sacred image as a degrading invention.

(2) In some beautiful passages of the *De Trinitate*,[7] Augustine explains that one cannot love without knowing nor know without seeing or imagining ("Sed quis diligit quod ignorat . . . Nemo diligit Deum antequam sciat. Et quid est Deum scire, nisi eum mente conspicere firmeque perspicere?"). The believer who reads the Gospel or Paul's Epistles cannot but represent Christ and the Apostles with bodily forms. "Whether this image corresponds to reality, which is rare, or not, what is important is not to believe in it, but to achieve another worthwhile knowledge which is suggested by this representation" (". . . quod autem verum

non sit, aut etiam si verum est—quod rarissime potest accidere—non hoc tamen fide ut teneamus quidquam prodest, sed ad aliud aliquid utile, quod per hoc insinuatur"). Augustine excluded a priori the possibility of an image resembling its subject. He recognized that "the face of the Lord (or the Virgin or St. Paul) varied infinitely according to the different representations which each person makes" ("Nam et ipsius Dominicae facies carnis innumerabilium cogitationum diversitate variatur et fingitur . . ."). He accepted this diversity due to the personal imagination of each believer and artist, and he understood that this implies an inherent contradiction, since Christ, the historical character, "was unique, whoever he was" (". . . quae tamen unica erat, quaecumque erat"). The solution is to accept these dubious representations, but so as not to render them "false objects" ("Nimirum autem cavendum est, ne credens animus id quod non videt, fingat sibi aliquid quod non est, et speret diligatque quod falsum est"); one must not stop here, but reach beyond them, by thought and through faith, to the truth that they depict. This text offers the basis for religious painting as it will be practiced in the West, but does not take cult images into account, as it leaves figurative representation on the level of individual imagination and accepts the image only as a necessary but insufficient transition stage.

(3) In an answer in the *Amphilochia*, Photius, like Augustine, does not believe in the possibility of painting Christ and the saints as they were, but the differences which he recognizes and acknowledges between various representations of the same holy person, in particular Christ, are for him cultural and not individual.[8] The Greeks, the Indians, and the Ethiopians think that the Savior came on earth in their likeness; but this is no reason for doubting the existence of a historic and unique Christ. These differences are of the same nature as linguistic differences; the Gospels are the Gospels whether written in Greek or in another language. One can hesitate over the physical appearance of Christ without doubting his incarnation. The icon defines itself not only by the form of the model, but by the subject's disposition, the localization of the image in a holy place, the forms of worship surrounding it, the inscription and the symbols accompanying it. In spite of cultural specificities, the icon's meaning, structure, and finality are every-

[5] Anthony of Novgorod (1200), ed. Hr. M. Loparev, "Kniga palomnik. Skazanie mest svjatyh vo Caregrade Antonija arhiepiscopa Novgorodskago v 1200 godu," *Pravoslavnyi Palestinskij Sbornik* 17, 3 (St. Petersburg, 1899), 7; trans. B. de Khitrowo, *Itinéraires russes en Orient* (Geneva, 1889), 90.

[6] Ed. G. Ostrogorsky, *Studien zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Bilderstreites* (Breslau, 1929), 71–72, § 24–26; on the problem of authenticity, see most recently P. Maraval's clarification, "Epiphane, docteur des iconoclastes," in *Nicée II. 787–1987, douze siècles d'images religieuses*, ed. Fr. Boespflug and N. Lossky (Paris, 1987), 51–62.

[7] VIII, 4–5.

[8] *Amphilochia*, 205, PG 101, cols. 948–52; ed. B. Laourdas and L. G. Westerink, *Epistulae et Amphilochia*, I (Leipzig, 1983), 108–11, ep. 65, to the abba Theodore (864/865?).

where the same. An important step has been taken. Photius no longer spoke of the icon as a simple representation but as a cultural object and an object of worship with its own raison d'être. He no longer evoked the imagination of the painter but collective imagination, that of a Christian civilization which recognizes itself in "its" holy images and possesses the code for them. A slightly specious analogy with the plurality of languages allows us to set aside the problem of the image's likeness, and to replace it with the problem of its identification.

II. IDENTIFYING BY WORD AND IMAGE

To identify a person using simple physical characteristics, the Greeks and Romans had a codified vocabulary and a formula, the *eikonismos,* at their disposal. This formula was widely used in fiscal and administrative documents in Egypt,[9] in works of physiognomy[10] and astrology,[11] and in the *Chronicles of the Reigns.*[12] By tradition, an unknown person could be described,[13] a former or future emperor could be evoked, the future face of a man

could be read in the horoscope of the new-born child,[14] a thief or a fugitive slave could be identified from his description, fraudulent substitutions could be foiled, or the portrait of the typical ambitious or jealous person could be drawn. About a hundred words, classified under elementary headings, enabled one to differentiate people positively by height, skin color, shape of the nose, hair color and style, the color and cut of the beard, etc. In the first century A.D.(?), Diktys and Dares had used the formula of the *eikonismos* in their "Journals" on the Trojan War to paint a portrait of sixteen Greek and twelve Trojan heroes whom the authors were supposed to have seen with their own eyes.[15] Ajax, the son of Oileus, is "tall, robust, with honey-colored skin, he has a squint, a beautiful nose, black curly hair, a thick beard, an elongated face, is a bold warrior, magnanimous, obsessed with women."[16]

Thereby a curiosity was satisfied that had not been sated in the *Iliad,* and Homer's poem was transformed into a kind of Hollywood film. It is hardly surprising to find in Malalas, in the sixth century, descriptions of several emperors and of the apostles Peter and Paul in the same style as of those of the Trojan War, for the Gospels, by virtue of their lacunas, call on the imagination as much as the *Iliad.* Around the same period as the *Troika* forgers, their counterparts, the makers of Christian apocrypha, readily gave the heroes of the New Testament a face, a recognizable appearance, a summary portrait drawn up and transmitted from an alleged visual account,[17] an icon in words in response to an immense desire to visualize. From an

[9] See J. Fürst, "Untersuchungen zur Ephemeris des Diktys von Kreta," *Philologus* 61 (1902), 377–79 and 597–614; J. Hasebröck, *Das Signalement in den Papyrusurkunden,* Papyrusinstitut Heidelberg 3 (Berlin-Leipzig, 1921); A. Caldara, *I connotati personali nei documenti d'Egitto dell'età greca e romana,* Studi della Scuola papirologica 4, 2 (Milan, 1924); G. Misener, "Iconistic Portraits," *CPh* 19 (1924), 97–123; G. Hübsch, *Die Personalangaben als Identifizierungsvermerke im Recht der gräko-ägyptischen Papyri,* Berliner juristische Abhandlungen 20 (Berlin, 1968).

[10] See esp. E. Evans, "Descriptions of Personal Appearance in Roman History and Biography," *HSCPh* 46 (1935), 43–84; eadem, *Physiognomics in the Ancient World,* TAPS, n.s. 59, 5 (Philadelphia, 1969); G. Dagron, "Image de bête et image de Dieu: La physiognomonie animale dans la tradition grecque et ses avatars byzantins," in *Poikilia: Études offertes à J. -P. Vernant* (Paris, 1987), 69–80.

[11] See esp. Ptolemy, *Apotelesmatica,* III.12, ed. F. Boll and A. E. Boer (Leipzig, 1957), 142–47. Ptolemy is cited word for word in Hephaestio Thebanus, *Apotelesmatica,* II.12, ed. D. Pingree, I, (Leipzig, 1973), 137–40; see also Abū Maʿshar-Albumasaris, *De revolutionibus nativitatum,* app. 2, ed. D. Pingree (Leipzig, 1968), 245 f. A standard usage of *eikonismoi* is to be found in the texts edited in the *Catalogus codicum astrologorum graecorum,* I–XII (Brussels, 1898–1953).

[12] For instance, in Malalas and Cedrenus, Leo Grammaticus, the Ps.-Symeon, the *Scriptor incertus de Leone Armenio,* for the Byzantine emperors; in a horoscope wrongly ascribed to Stephanus of Alexandria and in the *Annals* of Eutychius of Alexandria for the caliphs. Cf. Fürst, "Untersuchungen," 616–22; C. Head, "Physical Description of the Emperors in Byzantine Historical Writing," *Byzantion* 50 (1980), 226–40; eadem, *Imperial Byzantine Portrait: A Verbal and Graphic Gallery* (New York, 1982); B. Baldwin, "Physical Description of Byzantine Emperors," *Byzantion* 51 (1981), 8–20.

[13] As did the astrologist whom Liutprand met in 968 in Constantinople, *Liudprandi legatio,* 42, ed. J. Becker, *Die Werke Liudprands von Cremona,* MGH, ScriptRerGerm, 3rd ed., 198.

[14] See, e.g., D. Pingree, "The Horoscope of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus," *DOP* 27 (1973), 224, 229.

[15] Under the name of Diktys and Dares, two forged "Accounts" of the Trojan War written by presumed eyewitnesses have survived: Diktys of Crete claimed he was Idomeneus' companion, and Dares asserted he had fought in defense of Troy. Both texts were apparently written in Greek in the first century A.D., but they have been transmitted only in much later Latin translations (4th and 5th–6th centuries?): Dictys Cretensis, *Ephemeris belli Troiani,* ed. W. Eisenhut (Leipzig, 1958); Dares Phrygii, *De excidio Troiae historia,* ed. F. Meister (Leipzig, 1873). The physical descriptions of twelve Trojan heroes and sixteen Greek heroes disappeared in the Latin Diktys, but were taken from the Greek Diktys and were reproduced verbatim by Malalas (*Chronographia,* Bonn ed., 103–6) and by Isaac Porphyrogenitus, son of Alexis I Comnenus (ed. H. Hinck, in *Polemonis Declamationes* [Leipzig, 1873], 80–88).

[16] Malalas, *Chronographia,* 104; Isaac Porphyrogenitus, op. cit., 83. Ajax is said to be "obsessed by women" because the authors of *posthomerica* declared he had raped Cassandra in Athena's temple.

[17] For Paul, *Acta Pauli et Theclae,* 3, ed. R. A. Lipsius and M. Bonnet, *Acta apostolorum apocrypha,* I (Leipzig, 1891), 237, and *Acta Petri et Pauli,* 9 and 21, ibid., I, 183, 188; for Bartholomeus,

unknown source, Malalas tells us that St. Peter was "old, of medium height, with a receding hairline, white skin, pale complexion, eyes dark as wine, a thick beard, big nose, eyebrows that met, an upright posture, intelligent, quick-tempered, changeable, cowardly [or at least timid, because of the "denial"], inspired by the Holy Spirit, a worker of miracles."[18]

Let us pause a moment to evoke some striking analogies between a verbal *eikonismos* and the painted icon.

(1) Contrary to the ἔκφρασις, which plays with artistic effects and establishes the place of the artist, *eikonismos* simply aims at characterizing a person, never putting him or her "in context," but making the subject appear posed, fixed, with a vacant expression, as in an identity photograph. In papyri it is the equivalent of a signature,[19] and in historical accounts the equivalent of an eyewitness.[20]

Similarly, the cult image eliminates anything circumstantial, and aims at pure presence.

(2) The *eikonismos* focuses on the particular; it painstakingly records every scar on the face, to the point that in papyri this singularity enables one to condense the description, and the words οὐλή ("scar") and εἰκονισμός are often synonymous.[21] Such is the icon, where individualization is obtained, as Ernst Kitzinger observed,[22] by accumulated details which gradually modify a general schema: sometimes a scar (for Gregory of Nazian-

zus),[23] age, hair and beard, and more often, for convenience, costume, posture, and material attributes. The cult image is put together somewhat like the "identikit" picture of our criminal investigators by approximations based on types.

(3) Neither the *eikonismos* nor the icon completely breaks away from these types. The person described or represented is integrated into classifiable categories (bishops, hermits, monks, soldiers). The person is linked to more or less refined moral and physical models.[24] The writer or the painter brings his model to the threshold of individuality, but it is up to the imagination of the reader or spectator to do the rest: to fill in the fixed form, give it life, and make it into a perfect image.

(4) The ill-defined, uncompleted quality of the icon and the *eikonismos* springs from their common function: to identify the runaway slave, the prophesied emperor, the saint, that other "wanted" man, when he appears. Recognition is the important thing. The physical features of Christ, the Virgin, or the saints, recorded by presumed eyewitnesses, are transmitted by description or painting in the expectation of a reappearance. This is what we might call the prospective dimension of the *eikonismos* and the icon, the importance of which we shall see later.

Since the genre existed, we might have expected to find in hagiographic literature—which was not reluctant to make forgeries—an *eikonismos* for almost every saint, vouching for his or her historicity and foreshadowing his icon. If there were attempts in this direction, they must have been quite limited. As mentioned earlier, the apocryphal Acts give painters some clues; the two main apostles are described in Malalas as we see them in paintings; and several authors of saints' lives describe their heroes with the obvious intention of fixing an iconography by this kind of eye-witness account.[25] But the cases are rare. The *Synaxarion* of Constantinople, compiled in the second half of the tenth century from other *synaxaria* and *menologia*,[26] gives some interesting indications, which I summarize here. Only thirty-two from more than a thousand

Passio Bartholomei, 2, ibid., II, 1 (Leipzig, 1898), 131; for Andrew, *Acta Andreae apostoli cum laudatione contexta*, 12, ed. M. Bonnet, *AnalBoll* 13 (1894), 320. For a good overview, see Fürst, "Untersuchungen," 407–17.

[18] *Chronographia*, 256: ... γέρων ὑπῆρχε, τῇ ἡλικίᾳ διμοιριαῖος, ἀναφάλας, κονδόθριξ, ὁλοπόλιος τὴν κάραν καὶ γένειον, λευκός, ὑπόχλωρος, οἰνοπαὴς τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς, εὔπώγων, μακρόρινος, σύνοφρυς, ἀνακαθήμενος, φρόνιμος, ὀξύχολος, εὐμετάβλητος, δειλός, φθεγγόμενος ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ θαυματουργῶν. See ibid., 257 for Paul.

[19] Cf. Hübsch, *Die Personalangaben*, 96–108, in comments on formulae such as εἰκόνικα (or ἐγράφη καὶ εἰκονίσθη) φαμένου μὴ εἰδέναι γράμματα.

[20] So much so that the *eikonismos* has become an essential requisite for historical forgeries, associated with expressions like, "I saw it with my own eyes"; cf. W. Speyer, *Die literarische Fälschung im Altertum* (Munich, 1971), 73–74; for Diktys: Malalas, *Chronographia*, 107.1–8.

[21] For instance, in *P. Oxy.* VII, 1022 (A.D. 103): "sine iconismo" ("no special sign"; in Greek, οὐλὴν οὐκ ἔχει); "iconismus supercilio sinistro" ("with a scar on his left eyebrow"); "iconismus frontis parte dextra" ("with a scar on the right-hand side of his forehead"). Since Antiquity the significance of scars in recognition is a literary *topos:* in Euripides' *Electra*, Orestes is identified by a scar near his eyebrow; in the *Odyssey*, Ulysses is recognized by a scar on his knee.

[22] "Some Reflections on Portraiture in Byzantine Art," *ZRVI* 8.1 (=*Mélanges Georges Ostrogorsky*) (1963), 185–93.

[23] See the *eikonismos* given for Gregory in the "Descriptions of the 'God-bearing' Fathers," M. Chatzidakis, Ἐκ τῶν Ἐλπίου τοῦ Ῥωμαίου, Ἐπ.Ἑτ.Βυζ.Σπ. 14 (1938), 412; reproduced in the *Synaxarium CP*, cols. 422–23.

[24] Cf. Dagron, "Image de bête," 72–74.

[25] See, for example, the descriptions of Euthymius and Cyriacus, Theodore the Studite, and Paul of Latros, cited below, notes 34 and 37–38.

[26] Cf. H. Delehaye, "Le Synaxaire de Sirmond," *AnalBoll* 14 (1895), 396–434; idem, *Synaxarium CP*, Prolegomena, II–VI; J.

notices of prophets and saints give physical descriptions of the *eikonismos* type.[27] Twenty-four of these thirty-two *eikonismoi* are to be found in what is commonly, but incorrectly, called the "Handbook of Painting by Elpios-Ulpius the Roman,"[28] which is a mixture of disparate elements: (1) physical descriptions of eleven "God-bearing Fathers" extracted from a compilation of ecclesiastical history by a certain Elpios-Ulpius, ten of which appear in the *Synaxarion;*[29] (2) a description of seventeen ma-

jor and minor prophets made for artists and therefore entirely different in style and aim, twelve of which appear in the *Synaxarion;*[30] (3) descriptions of the apostles Peter and Paul akin to those of Malalas, but which are enriched by indications drawn from the *Acta apocrypha Pauli et Theclae.*[31]

The eight *eikonismoi* of the *Synaxarion* not found in either of these sources have a relatively precise hagiographic origin: in the *Historia Lausiaca* for Macarius of Alexandria,[32] in a *laudatio* derived from it for Mark the Monk,[33] in the works of Cyril of Scythopolis for abbas Euthymius and Cyriacus,[34] in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* for Arsenius,[35] in diverse hagiographic texts for Mark the Evangelist,[36] Theodore the Studite,[37] and Paul of La-

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Noret, "Ménologes, Synaxaires, Ménées, essai de clarification d'une terminologie," *AnalBoll* 86 (1968), 21–24.

[27] If one excludes the *ekphraseis* of martyrs, written in a completely different style, drawing a conventional, unpersonalized model-portrait: tall in stature, with skin as white as snow, red cheeks, hair like gold (see the descriptions of Theodore of Perge, Mercurius, Sabas Stratelates, Philaretus, *Synaxarium CP,* cols. 65, 259, 627, 695); and if one excludes the theatrical evocations of Judas (ibid., col. 788) and John the Baptist (ibid., cols. 931–32), which are also *ekphraseis* rather than *eikonismoi.*

[28] The text was first published by A. F. C. Tischendorf, *Anecdota sacra et profana* (Leipzig, 1861), 129 ff, based on Coislin 296 (12th century); M. Chatzidakis published a much better edition, based on an examination of Mosquensis synod. 108, of 993, and not just the Coislin: Ἐκ τῶν Ἐλπίου τοῦ Ῥωμαίου, Ἐπ.Ἑτ.Βυζ.Σπ. 14 (1938), 393–414; fairly recently, F. Winkelmann took up the subject afresh and published a text which juxtaposes the "Ulpius Extracts" and their transcription in the *Synaxarium:* "Über die körperlichen Merkmale der gottbeseelten Väter," in *Fest und Alltag in Byzanz,* a collection of articles dedicated to H.-G. Beck, ed. G. Prinzing and D. Simon (Munich, 1990), 107–27. These authors, especially Winkelmann, think that the Coislin retains the original form of a handbook for painters written by Elpios-Ulpius after 836 and before 993, which the *Synaxarium CP* used as a direct source. It is difficult to accept this interpretation, as I shall have the opportunity to point out elsewhere at greater length. The title of the Moscow manuscript (Ἐκ τῶν Οὐλπίου τοῦ Ῥωμαίου ἀρχαιολογουμένων τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἱστορίας περὶ χαρακτήρων σωματικῶν θεοφόρων πατέρων) seems to indicate that Ulpius was the compiler of an ecclesiastical history, living in Rome or Roman in origin, and probably writing at a fairly early period (5th–6th century?), from whose work a later copyist must have extracted various *eikonismoi* from the 4th–5th century Fathers, adding portraits of Patriarchs Tarasius (d. 806) and Nicephorus (d. 828/829). Soon other extracts were welded onto this core, which grew like a snowball, and the text of the 12th-century Coislin, with a title that artificially retained the name of Elpios-Ulpius, and references to the "God-bearing" Fathers, is only a jumble of odd, short extracts on Adam, the prophets, Christ, Peter, and Paul. As a result, it cannot be said that the *Synaxarium CP* drew its descriptive notes from a handbook of the later 10th century which was identical to the Coislin, and, even less, can the *Synaxarium* be used as Winkelmann did, to reconstitute this handbook in its most comprehensive state: the *Synaxarium* borrowed from the "Ulpius Extracts" for the "God-bearing" Fathers, and from other sources—the same as the Coislin's copyist transcribed—for the prophets and apostles.

[29] Dionysius Areopagita, Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, Athanasius of Alexandria, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Cyril of Jerusalem, Patriarchs Tarasius and Nicephorus (Chatzidakis, op cit., 412–14; *Synaxarium CP,* cols. 102, 422–23, 366, 383, 399, 219, 399–400, 546, 488, 724). The *eikonismos* of Eustathius of Antioch, a relatively minor character who is, moreover, chronologically misplaced in the Moscow manuscript, appears in only one of the manuscripts of

the *Synaxarium* under the date of 23 August (ed. H. Delehaye, cols. 917–18, apparatus, lines 56–58); in the *Synaxarium* "of Sirmond," the notice about Eustathius appears under the date of 21 February (ibid., cols. 480–81) and does not include an *eikonismos.*

[30] Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Malachi, Zephaniah, Haggai, Habakkuk, Nahum, Jonas, Amos, and Hosea (Chatzidakis, op. cit., 409–10; *Synaxarium CP,* cols. 667, 647, 833, 317, 368, 275, 313, 272–73, 269, 64, 750, 144). These physical descriptions gathered by the 12th-century copyist aimed solely at providing artists with models for distinguishing one prophet from another. Some indications, such as "Zephaniah: resembles John the Theologian with a slightly rounded beard," do not imply that the "handbook" contained a description of John the Theologian now lost: the artists knew how to represent him. The *Synaxarium CP* draws on the same source, but transcribes the notices in a more literary style, misunderstands some words, and produces some misinterpretations; five *eikonismoi* were, moreover, omitted for obvious reasons: some words not understood for Baruch and Joel, indications contrary to tradition for Zechariah (young instead of old), comparisons for Obadiah and Micah ("resembles the apostle James," "resembles Cosmas the Anargyrus").

[31] Chatzidakis, op. cit., 400–402, 411–12; *Synaxarium CP,* cols. 778 (Peter), 779–80 (Paul). On references given in the *Acta Pauli et Theclae,* see above note 17.

[32] *Synaxarium CP,* col. 404; Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca,* 18, ed. C. Butler, *The Lausiac History of Palladius* (Cambridge, 1898–1904; repr. Hildesheim, 1967), II, 58, where the *eikonismos* is really equivalent to an eyewitness, since the author asserted he had seen Macarius of Alexandria with his own eyes (prooim., ibid., II, 4).

[33] *Synaxarium CP,* col. 511; unpublished *laudatio, BHG,* 2246. Mark the Monk is apparently a replica of Mark of Alexandria.

[34] *Synaxarium CP,* cols. 405 and 89; Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii,* 40, 50, ed. E. Schwartz, *Kyrillos von Skythopolis* (Leipzig, 1939), 59, 73; *Vita Cyriaci,* 21, ibid., 235.

[35] *Synaxarium CP,* cols. 663–64, apparatus, lines 53–55; *Apophthegmata patrum,* Arsenius, 42, PG 65, col. 108.

[36] *Synaxarium CP,* col. 630, in a hyper-rhetorical style. A portrait of Mark is preserved in the *Passio S. Marci evangelistae* (*BHG,* 1035), 11, *ActaSS,* April III, XLVII; see also the brief text *De forma corporis ejus* (BHG, 1038f) in Perizonianus F 10 C. Van de Vorst and H. Delehaye, *Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum graecorum Germaniae, Belgiae, Angliae,* SubsHag 13 (Brussels, 1913), 250.7, and in Vaticanus gr. 1660, an April *menologion,* dated 916, C. Giannelli, *Codices Vaticani Graeci. Codices 1485–1683* (Vatican, 1950), 397.22.

[37] *Synaxarium CP,* col. 216; *Vita Theodori Studitae a Michaele mon.* (*BHG,* 1754), 56, PG 99, col. 313, description reproduced in the

tros.[38] We can conclude, therefore, that the synax-
arist carried out a systematic inquiry, and that he
carefully reproduced all the descriptions of the
saints which he came across in the texts and to
which he gave the status of eye-witness accounts.
But he found only a few and invented none, by
proceeding, for example, with a sort of retrover-
sion of images into words. And yet, he did occa-
sionally examine the icons for information not
found in books: if he declared St. Therapon of Cy-
prus to be an ascetic monk before he became a
bishop, it was because he had seem him portrayed
as such.[39]

If the written *eikonismos* does not long continue
to accompany the cult image, it is because sacred
iconography soon had no longer any need for the
detour of words. From the sixth century onward,
and especially during the iconoclastic period, leg-
ends proclamed the main types of icons ἀχειρο-
ποίητοι (not made by human hands) or "apostolic,"
and certainly miraculous. Since then, the image
simply reproduced itself. It bore its own justifica-
tion. It no longer needed historical confirmation,
for it was history itself.

III. CONSENSUS: AN EXAMPLE OF
THE IMAGE OF CHRIST

It is the consensus of those who look at the cult
image which gives it what could be called its truth.
When this consensus is created, the image has only
to resemble itself: it is its own point of reference.
For iconography escapes not only from the ca-
prices of the artist, but also from the constraints of
historicity. Nothing illustrates this better than the
progressive elaboration of the image of Christ, of
which a series of texts helps us to retrace the vari-
ous stages.

It begins with a refusal. Christ was ugly accord-
ing to numerous Christians during the first centu-
ries, who refer to Isaiah 53:2–3 ("He had neither
good appearance nor glory; we have seen him and
he was without good appearance or beauty, but his

appearance was unworthy and made all men reject
him"),[40] to Psalm 22:7 ("But I am a worm and no
man, a reproach of men and despised by the
people"), and 2 Cor. 5:16 ("Though we have
known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth
know we him no more"). This ἄτιμος and ἀειδής
Christ[41] discourages representation, just as the
polymorphism that various currents (including the
Gnostic) attributed to the Savior. This polymorph-
ism made him appear to the disciples and later
generations in the symbolic forms of a child, an
adult, and an old man (as is the case in the apoc-
ryphal *Acta Iohannis*),[42] and, more generally, in the
form adapted to the level of perfection and psy-
chology of everyone: with Paul's features for The-
cla, who loves Christ through Paul.[43] Origen wrote:
"Even if there was just one Jesus, he was multiple
in aspect for the spirit, and those who looked at
him did not see him in the same way."[44] The poly-

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[40] Here I have translated the Greek text of the Septuagint,
which is unambiguous.

[41] Justin, *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo*, 14 and 49, PG 6, cols.
505, 584; τῇ μορφῇ αὐτοῦ τῇ δυσειδεστάτῃ in the Apocryphal
Acts of Thomas, ed. R. A. Lipsius and M. Bonnet, *Acta aposto-
lorum apocrypha*, II, 2 (Leipzig, 1903), 162. Other references,
notably to Clement of Alexandria and Origen, are to be found
in the article "Jésus," *DACL*, VII, 2 (1927), cols. 2395, 2397–
2400, and in A. Grillmeier, *Der Logos am Kreuz: Zur christolo-
gischen Symbolik der älteren Kreuzigungsdarstellungen* (Munich,
1956), 42–47.

[42] *Acta Ioannis*, 88–89, 93, ed. E. Junod and J.-D. Kaestli, Cor-
pus christianorum, series apocryphorum 1 (Turnhout, 1983),
191–93, 197–99; see also *Acta Petri cum Simone*, 21, ed. R. A.
Lipsius and M. Bonnet, I (Leipzig, 1891), 69; *Acta Andreae et
Matthiae*, 17–18 and 33, ibid., II, 1 (Leipzig, 1898), 84–89, 115–
16; *Acta Petri et Andreae*, 2 and 16, ibid., II, 1, 117–18, 124; *The
Shepherd of Hermas*, 18–23, ed. and trans. R. Joly, *Hermas. Le
Pasteur*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1968), 126–39. Cf. J. E. Weis-
Liebersdorf, *Christus und Apostelbilder: Einfluss der Apokryphen auf
die ältesten Kunsttypen* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1902), 30–52. On
the polymorphism of Christ, see Grillmeier, *Der Logos*, 49–55;
J. E. Ménard, "Transfiguration et polymorphie chez Origène,"
in *Epektasis: Mélanges patristiques offerts au Cardinal Jean Daniélou*
(Paris, 1972), 367–83; A. Orbe, *Christologia gnostica* (Madrid,
1976), II, 127–34; E. Junod, "Polymorphie du Dieu Sauveur,"
in *Gnosticisme et monde hellénistique*, Publication de l'Institut Ori-
entaliste de Louvain 27 (Louvain, 1982), 38–46; Junod and
Kaestli, eds., *Acta Iohannis*, II, 466–93 and 698–700, which in-
cludes a more comprehensive bibliography (470 note 1).

[43] *Acta Pauli et Theclae*, 21, ed. R. A. Lipsius and M. Bonnet,
Acta apostolorum apocrypha, I (Leipzig, 1891), 250.

[44] *Contra Celsum*, II, 64 and IV, 16, ed. and trans. M. Bonnet,
I, SC 132 (Paris, 1967), 434–37, II, SC 136 (Paris, 1968), 220–
23; passages cited by Ménard, op. cit., 368. See also the *Gospel
according to Philip*, Sentence 26, ed. and trans. J. E. Ménard,
L'Évangile selon Philippe (Paris, 1967), 58–61 (text), 145–47
(commentary): "(Christ) did not reveal himself as he was in re-
ality, but as he was seen: great to the great, humble to the
humble, an angel for the angels"; the *Gospel according to Thomas*,
log. 13, ed. and trans. A. Guillaumont et al., *L'Évangile selon
Thomas* (Paris, 1959), 8–9, also plays with this subjectivity, which
surprised Photius on reading the *Acta apostolorum apocrypha*, in

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Vita Theodori a Theodoro Daphnopata (?) (*BHG*, 1755), 113, ibid.,
col. 216.

[38] *Synaxarium CP*, cols. 312–13, apparatus, lines 44–46; *Vita S.
Pauli junioris*, 45, ed. H. Delehaye, in Th. Wiegand, *Der Latmos*
(Berlin, 1913), 131; description reproduced in the *Laudatio*, 53,
ibid., 154.

[39] *Synaxarium CP*, col. 710: "That he had chosen the life of a
monk is what his pictures show by portraying him like one and
dressed as such." The *Synaxarium* notice reproduces the indica-
tions of an abbreviated *laudatio* of Therapon, *BHG*, 1797–98,
ed. L. Deubner, *De incubatione capita quattuor* (Leipzig, 1900),
120–25; it adds only this remark.

morphous Christ had an iconography,[45] but very rare, too intellectual and indirect for use in worship. In this context, only the individual imagination could give Christ a true face, and that excluded the possibility of an icon.

John Chrysostom is probably one of the first to have proclaimed aloud, on the basis of a new exegesis of Isaiah and Psalm 44, that Christ was handsome,[46] but this beauty was for a long time acknowledged as that of the Transfiguration. Christ has in fact two faces: that of an ordinary human being and that of the Resurrection, of which only the disciples Peter, James, and John were witnesses by anticipation, when they saw τὸ εἶδος τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἕτερον, his clothes becoming white as light, Moses and Elijah appearing at his side (Matt. 17: 12–9; Mark 9: 2–9; Luke 9: 28–36). One wonders why, when he was arrested, he was not recognized and had to be pointed out (Matt. 26: 46–49). Origen thinks that he was already transfigured and unrecognizable.[47] On the contrary, Epiphanius thinks that he looked like the most ordinary of his disciples.[48] For this more or less orthodox speculation on the only two passages in the New Testament concerning the physical appearance of Christ, there is an iconographic transcription, which is precise but unstable: the Syriac Gospel of Rabbula, which was illustrated in 586 at the convent of Beth Zagda, gives Christ, depending on the illustrated passages, either a triangular face with short curly hair and beard, which would correspond to the image of Christ among men, or a long face with long, straight hair, which corresponds to his "glory."[49] A century later, both faces were reproduced on the coins of Justinian II, but in succession and no longer simultaneously—as was the case in the Gospel of Rabbula—as if a choice should be made between the two types, and as if the decision was made after a period of hesi-

tation.[50] A double image no longer corresponds, in fact, to Chalcedonian christology, and it contradicted the growing demands of devotion.

An anecdote recorded by Theodore the Lector in the early sixth century proves that this duality of representation was, perhaps at the end of the fifth century, considered embarrassing and was interpreted as an alternative.[51] When Gennadius was patriarch (458–471), ". . . an artist who had painted the portrait of Our Lord suffered a withered hand. It was said that a pagan had commissioned the portrait, and that under the name of the Savior he had painted the hair with a part in the middle so as not to hide the eyes—the way the children of the Hellenes represented Zeus—so that those looking at the picture might believe that the proskynesis was addressed to Christ." Here we have the presumed origin of the type of Christ with long hair: a crypto-portrait of Zeus executed for a crypto-pagan by a painter miraculously punished for his sacrilegious impiety. And Theodore the Lector added that another type of Christ, with short curly hair, is "more authentic" (ἀληθέστερον).[52] Tradition soon distorted the account, and retained only the error of the painter, who, between two types of iconography—one with long, straight hair and the other with short, curly hair—chose, as many others had done, the first, while the author of the account or, more generally, "the most exact historians" said that the second is the "more appropriate."[53]

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which he saw signs of docetism, i.e., doubts about the reality of the incarnation (*Bibliotheca*, cod. 114, ed. R. Henry, II, 85).

[45] On the iconography of Christ as an infant, young man, and in old age to signify he encompassed time itself, cf. H.-Ch. Puech, *Annuaire de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études, Vᵉ section*, 73 (1965–66), 122–25; 74 (1966–67), 128–37; 75 (1967–68), 157–61.

[46] *Expositio in Ps. XLIV*, 3, PG 55, cols. 185–86.

[47] *In Matth. commentariorum series*, 100, PG 13, col. 1750.

[48] Ostrogorsky, *Studien* (above, note 6), 72, § 26.

[49] Cf. J. Leroy, *Les manuscrits syriaques à peintures* (Paris, 1964), 117–18, 123, 139 ff, 207–8; pls. 24–30, 31, 32, 42. On the location of the monastery, cf. M. Mundell Mango, "Where Was Beth Zagba?" *Okeanos* (Essays Presented to I. Ševčenko), *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 7 (1983), 405–30; commentary by A. Grabar, *L'iconoclasme byzantin: Dossier archéologique* (Paris, 1957), 43–44.

[50] J. D. Breckenridge, *The Numismatic Iconography of Justinian II (685–695, 705–711 A.D.)*, American Numismatic Society (New York, 1959), 46–62; cf. C. Morrisson, *Bibliothèque Nationale. Catalogue des monnaies byzantines* (Paris, 1970), I, 397–98. Iconographic commentary in Grabar, *L'iconoclasme byzantin*, 16–17, 39–45, 235–38; E. Kitzinger, "Some Reflections on Portraiture in Byzantine Art" (above, note 22), 190–93. This was when the famous canon 82 of the Council in Trullo (691–692) prescribed the representation of Christ as a human being and not symbolically as a lamb.

[51] The text can be read in G. C. Hansen's edition, *Theodoros Anagnostes Kirchengeschichte* (Berlin, 1971), 107–8; but as the anecdote was borrowed by John of Damascus from Theodore's *Hist. eccl.*, it is found in the *Contra imaginum calumniatores*, III, 130, ed. B. Kotter, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, III (Berlin-New York, 1975),196, and, furthermore, in Parisinus gr. 1115, a conciliar anthology composed at quite an early period, studied by J. Munitiz, "Le *Parisinus graecus* 1115: Description et arrière-plan historique," *Scriptorium* 36 (1982), 51–67.

[52] Τὸ δὲ ἀληθέστερον ὑπάρχειν οὖλον καὶ ὀλιγότριχα. Like the miracle of Gennadius, this part of the sentence is not found in the Damascus extract, but in Parisinus gr. 1115, confirmed by the *Epitome* of Theodore's *Hist. eccl.* and by the entire tradition (see below), which also justifies the evident correction of πολύτριχα in ὀλιγότριχα/ὀλιγότριχον.

[53] *Epitome* of Theodore's *Hist. eccl.*, composed around 610, ed. G. C. Hansen, op. cit., 107; Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, 112 (reproduced by Leo Grammaticus, Bonn ed., 114;

John of Damascus, Theophanes Confessor, the *Suda,* and Nicephorus Callistus had no qualms about this anecdote, which ought to lead to the condemnation of the representation of a Jupiter-like Christ, at a time when this representation was no longer challenged. The debate on the historical face of Christ is at a loss. The iconography is confirmed in spite of the texts. It relies, from now on, on images of reference supposedly executed at the time of Christ and conserved in the *ipsissima loca,* in Jerusalem and in Rome, or on icons "not made by human hands," which cannot be disputed.[54] By consensus, an image of Christ triumphed in spite of all the objections concerning theology or likeness; it had created its own history and literature; it had created this imaginary Christ which is still ours.

IV. The Hagiographic Topos of Recognition

The icon of Christ obviously presents theological problems of faith and piety that require certain precautions. In the case of the saints, the situation is much simpler and the triumph of the image is assured almost without discussion. From hagiography we earlier extracted a *topos,* that of miraculous likeness, which eliminates, by means of miracle, the hazards of painting and the subjectivity of the painter to enable the icon to reproduce the exact features of its model. But another *topos* seems much more widespread, that of recognition, conferring on the image the same function we recognized in the *eikonismos:* it gives particulars permitting identification. "Such he was," one could say about a lifelike portrait. "Such he is and you are going to see him as such," one has to say about an icon that presages and foreshadows an apparition, and whose authenticity no longer requires historical proof, since it will be proved by dream or vision.

The hagiographical *topos* of recognition should normally be broken down into three sequences: (1) a witness has seen the saint alive; (2) he has transmitted a precise *eikonismos* to enable someone to paint an icon very like the original (or he painted

one himself), which was then faithfully reproduced; (3) a believer who is in the habit of praying before an icon, in a church or at home, recognizes the saint from the image when he appears to him. Such should be the course of events in order to ensure the logic of the apparition's identification; for the saint would not be recognized if the image were not like him. But most of the lives of saints skip a stage and merely note that the saint appeared not "as he was," but "as he is depicted in the icons." The monk Cosmas recognized the apostles Andrew and John ὅσον ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν ἁγίων εἰκόνων θεωρίας ἀναλογιζόμενος;[55] Irene of Chrysobalantos saw appearing before her the great Basil, Cappadocian like her, τοιοῦτον οἷον αἱ εἰκόνες γράφουσι;[56] in a letter from Nilus of Ancyra, a father implored St. Platon to free his imprisoned son, and his son has no hesitation in recognizing him ἐκ τοῦ πολλάκις τὸν χαρακτῆρα τοῦ ἁγίου ἐπὶ τῶν εἰκόνων τεθεᾶσθαι. This latter text, read at the Second Council of Nicea in 787, was commented on as follows: "This clearly illustrates that it is because he had seen the martyr's icon before, that he was able to recognize the martyr when he came to save him."[57] Note again a variation of the recognition *topos* which not only abbreviates but furthermore inverts the terms so as to highlight the role of cult images: (1) a man has a vision of a saint he has never seen portrayed and therefore does not recognize him; (2) he gives a physical description (a written *eikonismos*) of the person who appeared to a third person, who shows him the saint's icon (or he himself sees an icon of the saint by chance or design), thus permitting recognition. For instance, to take one famous example: in a life of Constantine, until Pope Sylvester has shown the emperor the icons of St. Peter and St. Paul, he is unable to identify the figures as he saw them in a dream.[58] There are many similar examples.

What conclusion can be drawn? Simply that the

Cedrenus, Bonn ed., I, 611), *Souda,* s.v. εἰκώ, ed. A. Adler, *Suidae Lexicon,* II (Stuttgart, 1967), 526; Nicephorus Callistus, *Hist. eccl.,* XV, 23, PG 147, col. 68.

[54] The *eikonismoi* of Christ in a fragment of the Ps.-Andrew of Crete (E. von Dobschütz, *Christusbilder: Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legenden* [Leipzig, 1899], 185*–86*) and in the anonymous account on the icon of *Maria romana* (ibid., 246**–47**) are in actual fact descriptions of icons said to be consistent with eye-witness accounts of the apostles or Flavius Josephus.

[55] Chr. Angelidi, "La Vision du moine Cosmas," *AnalBoll* 101 (1983), 84.125–28.

[56] *Vita S. Irenae,* 13, ed. J. O. Rosenqvist, *The Life of St Irene, Abbess of Chrysobalanton* (Uppsala, 1986), 56.9–13; see also 21, ibid., 94–96.

[57] *Ep.* 62, PG 79, cols. 580–81; Mansi, XIII, col. 33: . . . δέδεικται, ὅτι διὰ τῆς προεγνωσμένης αὐτῷ εἰκόνος τοῦ μάρτυρος ἐπέγνω αὐτὸν ἐπιστάντα, ὁπηνίκα σῶσαι αὐτὸν παρεγένετο. Cf. H. G. Thümmel, "Neilos von Ankyra über die Bilder," *BZ* 71 (1978), 10–21.

[58] *Vita S. Constantini* by Ignatius of Selymbria, 21, ed. Th. Ioannou, Μνημεῖα ἁγιολογικά (Venice, 1886), 186; see also the *Constitutum Constantini,* 8, ed. H. Fuhrmann, *Das Constitutum Constantini,* Fontes juris germanici antiqui 10 (Hannover, 1968), 73.

relationship between the image and its model has been reversed, and that they are no longer attached to the past but to the future. It is no longer the image that resembles the saint, but the saint who resembles his image, as is naïvely written in the Life of Theodore of Sykeon, where Sts. Cosmas and Damian appear to Theodore "as they appear in their cult images" (καθ' ὁμοίωσιν οὖν τῆς λατρείας ἐκείνης ὤφθησαν αὐτῷ οἱ εἰρημένοι ἅγιοι).[59] At the Second Council of Nicea, the reading of a miracle where Cosmas and Damian appear to a patient "in the form they take in their representations" (ἐν ᾧ ἐκτυποῦνται σχήματι), causes the priest John, topoteretes of the Eastern patriarchs, to make this more than equivocal comment: "This clearly shows that it was through their icons (διὰ τῶν εἰκόνων) that they appeared to the woman and healed her."[60] Furthermore, if saints do not always resemble their cult images in their visits to the faithful, it is because they are in disguise. Cosmas and Damian take on the appearance of bath servants or clerks,[61] St. Artemius that of a butcher, a sailor, a patrician.[62] Thus more than ever it is their cult image that serves as a reference; to unmask them one does not refer to their real face, or real dress, but to the face and dress as shown in their icons. That is good enough and amounts to the same thing. At the Second Council of Nicea, which shows how the Byzantines themselves reacted to hagiographic inventions, Bishop Theodore of Myra confirmed, by a personal example, the miracle described in the letter of Nilus of Ancyra to which I referred earlier. Something similar also happened to him: he had difficulties with an archon, and his archdeacon saw in a dream the patriarch of Constantinople, who said to him: "Let the metropolitan come to us, and we will make him give back his possessions." Theodore did not let himself be taken in: he asked his archdeacon to describe the man who had appeared to him and noted that the eikonismos did not correspond physically to the living patriarch, but to St. Nicholas as he was portrayed on the altar cloth in the church of Myra. The archdeacon himself identified the man he had seen as having been St. Nicholas disguised as a patriarch, διὰ τῆς πρὸς τὴν εἰκόνα ὁμοιώσεως.[63]

The image authenticates the vision more than it is authenticated by it, because consensus is based on the image, and it is from the image that a collective imagination springs, which is simply confirmed afterwards by the imagination of the visionary or the dreamer. In the miracles of Artemius, a girl of twelve is snatched from the "angels of death" by the saint and returns to earth. Those close to her ask her what the angels she had seen were like. They resemble, she answers, those painted standing upright in the church of the Prodromos. She is then asked what Artemius looks like physically. She says that he looks like the icon on the left side of the church. This confirms, at one and the same time, the reality of the vision and the validity of the images.[64] In her rapture, the little parishioner had simply seen the icons of her local church. Her personal imagination was totally impregnated with the imaginary world around her, that of an entire Christian civilization, which was conceived precisely in order to avoid strong divergences.

The scrupulous reproduction of icons was not only fidelity to a model but the prevention of any divergence, the normalization of the imagination. In eighteenth-century Bavaria, a pious nun called Crescentia posed a difficult problem for the Church, and missed being canonized, for having had visions of the Holy Spirit under the "unusual" form of a handsome young man, and for having distributed images representing these overpersonal visions.[65] This is exactly what the icon of East Christian civilization was seeking to avoid.

V. Images of Dreams and Visions

I recognize the saint from his image, but this image prefigures the vision I shall have of him. This is more or less the vicious circle in which we are

[59] Vita S. Theodori, 39, ed. A. J. Festugière, Vie de Théodore de Sykéon (Brussels, 1970), I, 34; see also 32, ibid., I, 29.

[60] Miracula SS. Cosma et Damiani, 13, ed. L. Deubner, Kosmas und Damianos (Leipzig, 1907),133; Mansi, XIII, cols. 64–65.

[61] Ibid., 1.20–21, 14.25, 18.43–44; ed. Deubner, op. cit., 99, 135, 145. When the saints appear in unusual dress, the hagiographer specifies ἐν σχήματι οὐ τῷ εἰωθότι αὐτοῖς.

[62] Miracula S. Artemii, 6, 14, 15, 25, 37, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, Varia sacra graeca (St. Petersburg, 1909), 7.15–16, 14.5, 15.12–13, 60.15–16, 35.21.

[63] Mansi, XIII, cols. 32–33; cf. G. Anrich, Der heilige Hagios Nikolaos in der griechischen Kirche (Leipzig-Berlin, 1913), I, 450. The Libri Carolini poke fun at Theodore of Myra's simplicity in believing in the dream of his archdeacon and his using it as an argument for cult images (II, 26, ed. H. Bastgen, MGH, Legum Sectio III, Conc II suppl. 158–61.

[64] Miracula S. Artemii, 34, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, op. cit., 51–55 (esp. 53). On this passage, cf. C. Mango, "On the History of the Templon and the Martyrion of St. Artemios at Constantinople," Zograf 10 (1979), 43.

[65] On the notion of "unusual" iconography, cf. Fr. Boespflug, Dieu dans l'art: Sollicitudini Nostrae de Benoît XIV (1745) et l'affaire Crescente de Kaufbeuren (Paris, 1984), esp. 39, 192, 277. Despite its very general title, this book deals only with Crescentia of Kaufbeuren, the bull Sollicitudini nostrae (1745), and papal refusal to have Crescentia canonized.

caught and which gives the world of the icon its perfect autonomy. Were the Byzantines themselves aware of this one-way leap into the imaginary? Several texts tend to suggest they were, and this leads us to define the relationship between painted images and the images of dreams or visions.

In his *Quaestiones*, Anastasius the Sinaite (second half of the seventh century) considered at length the modality of the union of the soul and the body and concluded that, after death, ordinary souls deprived of physical organs no longer function but remain withdrawn until the Resurrection, incapable of communicating with the world or recognizing parents and friends. An exception is made, however, for the souls of saints, illuminated by the Holy Spirit; but in this instance communication remains limited and indirect.

> It must be understood that all visions of saints in churches or by tombs occur via the intermediary of the angels and at God's command (δι' ἁγίων ἀγγέλων ἐπιτελοῦνται, δι' ἐπιτροπῆς Θεοῦ). How would it be possible, before the resurrection of the dead, while the bones and the flesh are still scattered, to see the saints themselves as fully formed human beings, often on horseback and armed as well? And if you disagree, tell me, how is it that Paul, Peter, or any other apostle, though unique, has been seen so often at the same time in different places? It is impossible to be in more than one place at the same time, even for the angels; only uncircumscribed God is able to do that.[66]

A livelier, more popular version of Anastasius' opinion and argumentation is to be found in the *Quaestiones ad Antiochum ducem* falsely attributed to Athanasius, where the question of recognition in the afterlife is treated at length. To summarize: after death, brothers, parents, and friends are unable to recognize one another, because their souls

are disembodied and possess no physical characteristics; it is therefore impossible to identify someone visually. Nor will recognition be any easier after the Resurrection, because the bodies will have been destroyed, as well as the σχήματα καὶ σημεῖα καὶ παθήματα, all clothes, distinctive signs, or scars which individualize the appearance of each and every one of us. Every man will therefore be in Adam's likeness. A single form will abolish physical individuality without affecting the moral personality.[67] Hence the question: if such is the case, how is it that saints often appear in their churches or by their tombs? The answer: these apparitions are not through the saint's souls, but through holy angels who take on the appearance of saints (δι' ἀγγέλων ἁγίων μετασχηματιζομένων εἰς τὸ εἶδος τῶν ἁγίων). These holy angels abandon the celestial liturgy, at God's command, in order to appear before a believer in the form of Peter, Paul, Demetrius, and so on. And the same seemingly unassailable argument is put forward: if one supposes that the vision is really of St. Peter or St. Paul themselves, then how can their simultaneous appearance in the thousands of churches dedicated to them be explained?[68]

Communication with the other world by visions and dreams is described by Anastasius and the Ps.-Athanasius as a striking masquerade regulated by God (but we assume that it could also be the work of the devil), with angels wearing on their faces—like masks—the images of the saints they represent.[69] This is by no means literary fantasy but a theory which, at the end of the sixth century, Eustratius, a priest of the Great Church, had already undertaken to refute, attributing it to "philosophers," in other words, "free-thinkers."[70] The

[66] Anastasius, *Quaestiones*, 89, PG 89, cols. 716–20, esp. 717. Remember that Anastasius' *Quaestiones*, edited by J. Gretser (Ingolstadt, 1617) and reprinted in Migne (PG 89, cols. 311–827), combines two collections usually kept separate in the manuscripts; cf. M. Richard, "Les véritables Questions et Réponses d'Anastase le Sinaïte," *Bulletin n° 15 (1967–1968) de l'Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes* (Paris, 1969), 39–56, repr. in idem, *Opera minora* (Turnhout-Louvain, 1977), III, 43–64. *Quaestio* 89, which concerns us here, does belong to the "true Questions," an authentic work of Anastasius the Sinaite; this is confirmed by B. Flusin, "Démons et Sarrazins: L'auteur et le propos des *Diègèmata stèriktika* d'Anastase le Sinaïte," TM 11 (1991), 381–409. The greater part of Anastasius' *Quaestiones et Responsiones* are to be found, rewritten and redistributed, in a later compilation (probably 8th/9th century in the version known to us), the *Quaestiones ad Antiochum ducem*, wrongly attributed to Athanasius (PG 28, cols. 597–709). The most knowledgeable student of this literature, M. Richard, remarked that the question of the relationship between the true *Quaestiones* by Anastasius and the *Quaestiones ad Antiochum ducem* by the Ps.-Athanasius will be fully elucidated only by a thorough study of the manuscript tradition, though he still thought Anastasius was the earlier: *Le Muséon* 79 (1966), 61 note 3.

[67] Ps.-Athanasius, *Quaestiones ad Antiochum ducem*, 22–25, PG 28, cols. 609–13. Like Anastasius, the author makes an exception of the saints, who maintained after death some ability to recognize those they had known, whether dead or alive.

[68] *Quaestio* 26, ibid., col. 613. This set of *Quaestiones* is borrowed from Anastasius the Sinaite.

[69] The theme of apparitions through the "lieutenancy of angels" occurs in Western literature from Ambrose and Augustine down to Pope Benedict XIV; cf. Boespflug, *Dieu dans l'art*, 221 and notes 36–38.

[70] On Eustratius, author of a life of the patriarch Eutychius (d. 582), cf. the brief article by J. Darrouzès, "Eustrate de Constantinople," in *DSp*, IV.2 (1961), cols. 1718 f. His Λόγος ἀνατρεπτικὸς πρὸς τοὺς λέγοντας μὴ ἐνεργεῖν τὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ψυχάς . . . has been edited by Allatius (Leo Allacci), in his *De utriusque ecclesiae occidentalis atque orientalis perpetua de dogmate de Purgatorio consensione* (Rome, 1654), 336–580. This lively polemical treatise (whose authenticity is confirmed by Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 171, ed. R. Henry, II, 165–67), is a response to the theory on the "inactivity" of the soul after death, of which a muted echo is to be found in Anastasius' *Quaestiones* over a century later.

stakes were high, for if the saints were inactive in the beyond, it was no use giving money to their churches. The souls of the saints, he retorted, are in "spiritual places," from whence they can emerge; at God's command, they come down to earth and appear to us, just like the angels, κατ' ὄναρ καὶ ὕπαρ. One might perhaps put forward the objection that souls are bodiless, and that saints sometimes appear to us armed, on horseback, or in other apparel. To which we answer as follows: just as the angels, who are by definition *asomatoi* (bodiless), imprint visions (ὁράσεις τυποῦσι), "so too the souls (of the saints) give impressions that are not real but are nonetheless true. Just as the painter, who with his diversity of colors, makes objects present without their existing in reality, bodiless spirits have a limited capacity to create impressions. These should be taken neither for fantasies nor for real things, but one would be wrong to consider that they are not true."[71] Eustratius salvaged what he considered the essential by establishing that saints after death have energy and are active, and so it is worthwhile to pray to them, but the mechanism of their appearing is more or less the same for him as for Ps.-Athanasius or for Anastasius, except that it is not angels but saints themselves who are their own image-bearers. The comparison with painting is enlightening: we are still in the realm of the imaginary. Waking visions or dreams define themselves as icons. They are visual impressions (τυπώσεις), which are true because holy, but without any basis in reality.

Via a roundabout, twisting path, Christianity silently returned to an idea that was dear to Neo-Platonic and Pythagorean philosophy: that a figurative representation is never more than an image of an image: to portray the "true image" of a holy man is not simply to make an accurate reproduction of his physical traits, but to imagine him in a kind of epiphany.[72] The problem of historical likeness is not merely dangerous, insofar as alleged eyewitnesses are not immune to criticism, but par-

ticularly pointless, because the image—and in the first place the holy image—is always a transfiguration and does not really belong to the past. An "authentic" portrait is an imagined portrait and therefore alive. This is probably why the iconography of Christ and the saints followed its own path, relatively unconcerned with the attacks and scruples of Epiphanius or others, breaking with the past and written evidence to turn toward the present of collective devotion and the future of the individual vision or dream, and tacitly replacing a vain idea of likeness with the reality of a social consensus.

For cult images may resemble anything, but they must be self-resembling and be interpreted by all unequivocally, like words in a language. Where faith is concerned, only the community counts; therefore one of the main differences between religious paintings and icons is that the first is more concerned with individual imagination and the second more severely regulated by social imagery. The *eikonismos* gradually lost its testimonial function and was transformed into a recipe and norm in handbooks on how to paint. And the icon, a production of this normalization, became itself a matrix of images. It tells the faithful under what form he will see the saint appear, and the saint what face he must assume and what clothes he must wear in order to be recognized. I have mentioned on this topic two recurrent *topoi* in the Lives of the Saints: that of perfect likeness guaranteed by a miracle, and that of the recognition of an apparition by means of an image. Both aim at eliminating any doubts concerning the conformity of an image to the model or a model to an image. This question is taboo. Hagiography does not take personal beliefs into account any more than does iconography, but rather normalizes them, contributing to a discreet but effective enforcement of forms.

This limitation of the imagination and exaltation of the miracle probably did not count as much as might be thought. I admit to not knowing what the Byzantines really thought about icons and visions, but the few texts on which I have commented show how critical they were and not at all naive. By means of prudent definitions, they were capable of defining the vast domain of the imaginary and of giving it autonomous (though strictly controlled) working rules. If a vision of a saint was no more than an animated image, the miracle of apparitions could easily find a place in daily life, ὕπαρ ἢ ὄναρ.

[71] Eustratius, Λόγος ἀνατρεπτικός, 24, ed. Allatius, op. cit., 518 f.

[72] Plotinus, *Enneads*, V, 8, 1, ed. and trans. E. Bréhier, *Plotin. Ennéades* (Paris, 1931), V, 135–36: "Phidias created his Zeus without taking any tangible model; he imagined him as he would be, if he deigned to appear before us"; on Socrates: VI, 3, 15, ed. E. Bréhier, VI, 1, 143; Philostratus, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, VI, 19, ed. and trans. F. C. Conybeare, II (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), 76–79, text cited above in the introductory quotation. See A. Grabar, "Plotin et les origines de l'esthétique médiévale," *CahArch* 1 (1945), 15–34; Junod and Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis*, II, 446–56, includes a useful bibliography.

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